

e-Bugle

Garrett Bugle Internet Edition

Volume 56

January 2009

No. 1



Calendar

Sat., Dec. 20	Monthly winter farmer's market, 9 am–12 noon, Penn Place	Mon., Jan. 12	Christmas tree collection; Town Council meeting, Town Hall, 8 pm
Thurs., Dec. 25	Merry Christmas; no trash collection	Tues., Jan. 13	Lunch Bunch, Town Hall, 12:30 pm; <i>Bugle</i> deadline, 4 pm
Thurs., Jan 1	Happy New Year; no trash collection; New Year's Day reception, Town Hall, 4–6 pm	Thurs., Jan 15	Jam Session, Town Hall, 8 pm
Sat., Jan. 3	GIVES, Penn Place lobby, 9 am–1 pm	Fri., Jan 23	Film Society, Town Hall, 7 pm, <i>The Hustler</i>
Mon., Jan. 5	Christmas tree and monthly yard waste collection	Wed., Jan. 28	Citizens Assoc. Meeting, Town Hall, 8 pm; setback ordinance/referendum discussion
Sat., Jan. 10	Large item pickup	Sat., Jan. 31	Town Dinner, Town Hall (see article p 4)

December Town Council Notes

The Town Council meeting on December 8 was subdued until the last 30 minutes. A variance request for 4711 Oxford was denied without prejudice so that the applicant can apply again in the future. The demolition request for the Payne house on Kenilworth was approved contingent upon receipt of a plat signed by authorities at the Park and Planning Commission. The structure will be taken down by a "green" method—saving what can be reused.

The town is awaiting a promised proposal from the Parks Department on the matter of a land swap for acquiring the Community Center, now used by the Nursery School. If the Parks Department takes over the land next to Penn

Place and reclassifies it as a Local Park, it might become available to be reserved by anyone—not just Garrett Parkers.

The date for the referendum on repealing Ordinance 2008-05 was not yet set because coordination with the Citizens Association is needed so that a meeting can be held after the holiday season. One resident observed that if the date is set for the May town elections, that would give the Land Use Task Force enough time to meet and the citizens of town a chance to hear both sides of the argument.

The budget for the current fiscal year is usually reexamined in January, but because of the current expenses of the suit against the town,
(continued next page)

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proposed changes are being brought forward to this month. This will let the town have the opportunity to amend the current accounting to reflect what may be needed in the coming year. At the moment, the 2010 budget is looking rather dire.

Then the fireworks started. The Council removed from the agenda an amendment to the current town zoning laws that would make an exception to the 82 percent lot coverage requirement in the case of an open front porch. It was explained that such an amendment could have helped resolve the ongoing lawsuit over a denied building permit for a porch, but that settlement had not been reached so the amendment was not needed for that purpose. Some at the meeting argued that had such an amendment been introduced earlier, it could have prevented the current “bleeding” of town money owing to the lawsuit. The meeting was assured by the plaintiff’s sister that if the ordinance were introduced now, the lawsuit would disappear and the town would not have to spend any more money. However, according to the Mayor, it was unlikely that such an amendment would be sufficient given the history of negotiations to settle the lawsuit. And so the lawsuit and discussions between the town and the plaintiffs continue.

Mary Moyer

Land Use Task Force

There is still an opportunity to serve Garrett Park in the New Year. The Land Use Task Force is still being formulated. One of the purposes of the Task Force will be to “provide a comprehensive look at our land use regulations, aimed at determining the future appearance and character of Garrett Park.” See www.garrettpark-md.gov and the November *Bugle* (also on the Web site) for more information and background. Gene Brantly has kindly agreed to chair the Task Force. The Town Council and Mayor invite all residents to contribute to the discussion of the rules that influence the future look of Garrett Park. If you would like to participate in this effort, please indicate your interest to the Town Office (garrett-park@comcast.net) by January 2, 2009.

GIVES: Good News!

Following the GIVES Soup Supper on November 2, many heartwarming things have transpired:

(1) Lynn Foster, former owner of the Garrett Park Cafe, contacted her many Garrett Park friends and supporters and some outside of town, asking for donations to the “Dinner Program for Homeless Women” (DPHW). And what an unbelievable response! With the help and organizational skills of Suzi Gifford, we were able to collect, in addition to many needed toiletries, backpacks and carrying cases, winter hats, scarves and gloves, coats, sweaters, sweatshirts, socks, underwear, feminine hygiene products, movies, cards, art supplies, towels, washcloths, etc.

(2) Ann Gordon’s daughter Ingrid (Ann has been a long-time supporter of GIVES) runs a non-profit organization called “Gear for Good” out of Seattle. Items are collected from catalogs that have been returned, seconds, etc., and are passed on to the needy—outdoor equipment, clothing, and more are available. She was able to send a large shipment of down jackets and coats to DPHW through its Executive Director, Erika Barry. Ingrid’s Web site is www.gearforgood.com.

(3) The Greater Washington Orthopedic Group/Holy Cross Hospital, Tina Dudley’s office, decided rather than exchanging gifts this year, they wanted to donate toiletry items to DPHW through our GIVES program. This is wonderful and gratifying news.

Lynn and others are working on cooking meals at DPHW in Washington, D.C., in the near future. Anyone wishing to help in any way, please call Lynn Foster, Glenda Ingham, or Karen Anderson. Thank you all so much. GIVES wishes you a blessed holiday and a happy and healthy New Year. Look for the 2009 GIVES volunteer calendar forthcoming.

Glenda Ingham & Karen Anderson

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The *Garrett Bugle* is a publication of the Citizens Association of Garrett Park, published 10 times a year. Publication of the *Bugle* is supported by member dues. All residents of Garrett Park are members of the Citizens Association. Yearly dues (\$20 per family or \$10 per individual per address) can be sent to Citizens Association, Box 456, Garrett Park, MD 20896.

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Town Administrator Notes

Snow removal: Our first snowstorm has yet to occur, and it is over 60 degrees outside as I write this. However, “the North Wind will blow and we shall have snow,” so in order to help Butch, Frank, and Jose keep our streets clear, we ask the following:

- Please park cars off the streets when snow is predicted.
- Please do not block intersections, particularly the Kenilworth/Rokeby barricade. This allows access for emergency vehicles and speeds up plowing.
- Please keep sidewalks in front of your homes shoveled. The Town Maintenance Department will take care of Penn Place and the Town Hall. Please call the Town Office if you would like a list of young residents who are interested in work shoveling snow.
- Do remember that Argyle Avenue is closed for sledding when snow falls. Be especially careful where Argyle meets Rokeby at Wells Park. Should the hill become icy, the hill will be cleared or sanded.
- Please remember that driveways are not plowed as part of the town’s snow removal contract. Residents are asked to clear their own driveways all the way to the street.

If any residents have special concerns about access to their homes during or after a snowstorm, please contact the Town Office so that we can be aware of them and provide assistance as needed.

We will make every effort to push back driveways and clear out snowbound cars. If you experience unusual problems, please call the Town Office (301-933-7488).

Leaf Removal, Yard Waste: Leaf removal has finished. Please do not put leaves in the street; they should be bagged and will be removed with the yard waste. Remember, yard waste is collected on the first Mondays of January and February (January 5 and February 2). We will return to weekly collection in March.

Trash Collection, Large Items, and Christmas Trees: Trash and recycling collections will take place on the usual days through the holidays, with Christmas and New Year’s Day trash collections being deferred until the following Monday. Please be sure to break down cardboard boxes to help the recycling crew. There will be a large item pickup on Saturday, January 10. Christmas trees will be collected and chipped by the town’s Maintenance Department as they are put out. Please remove as much tinsel as possible, and, of course, all ornaments, so we can keep our woodchip pile as clean as possible.

Holiday Tips: Many residents have already given generously to the Holiday Tip Fund for the men who collect our trash. If anyone still wishes

to make a gift, it is not too late. We typically receive numerous contributions after Christmas and make a second “New Year” distribution to these deserving individuals.

Town Diner: The Town Dinner is scheduled for Saturday, January 31. Save the date!

Elizabeth, Barbara, Butch, Frank, and Jose join me in wishing all town residents a happy holiday season. As always, if you have questions, concerns, or just want to chat, please feel free to stop by the office any time, or call at 301 933-7488. (The office will close at noon on Friday, December 21, and will be closed December 24, 25, and 31, as well as January 1.)

Ted Pratt, Town Administrator

A Capacity Crowd

Thanks to a listing on the Garrett Park Elementary School listserv, it was standing room only at the 26th Annual Do-It-Yourself Carolfest on December 12. That—plus most of the grandchildren of one of the small group singers—made for a crowd that participated loudly and well.

Thanks go to substitute director Terry Moore from Holy Cross Church, the small group that has been practicing since September (more altos needed next year), Ronnie Sauvain (who provided just enough refreshments), and Marian Green for decorating the room with some of Peggy Pratt’s recently cut down holly tree. The luminaria planned by Pam Morgan that ran from my house on Kenilworth to the Town Hall was a pleasant surprise. Many thanks to everyone. *Note:* If anyone ran off with a carol book, please return it!

Mary Moyer

Green Again

This month’s green was donated by Florence Gootenburg in honor of her husband, Santa Roy. Thanks, Flo.

Have you paid your dues yet? The Town Dinner is coming up January 31, and we could use the money for decorations and wine! You can mail your family’s dues to Box 456.

Mary Moyer



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Citizens Association News

The Next Citizens Association meeting will be held on January 28, 2009, at 8 pm in the Town Hall. The topic of discussion will be the referendum on the new town law that changed town zoning from requiring an 82 percent “minimum combined setback” on properties to one that allows a maximum of 18 percent lot coverage.

Town Dinner

The Town Dinner is set for January 31, 2009. The theme this year is “Neighbors.” Please join us to share fun times and funny stories about your neighbors, past and present, and to have a say in who is elected to the next Citizens Association board. We need more residents to become involved, so if you are interested in joining the board or in helping out with the Citizens Association, please call Chris Strong (even if you can’t make it to the dinner).

People will be admitted at 6:00 and we will sit down at 6:30. As always, this is a pot luck supper. Along with your own serving utensils, you are asked to bring one of the following: appetizers, salad and breads, main dish, or dessert (enough for 8 to 10 people). A fee of \$5 will be collected at the door to cover the cost of decorations, drinks, and paper goods, and you can also pay your Citizens Association dues at the same time (\$10 for individuals and \$20 per family). An envelope will be included in the next edition of the *Bugle*, so anyone who is not able to attend the dinner can pay their dues by mail.

Since space is limited, please call in your reservation and what dish you will be bringing to Mario Grande by phone or e-mail as soon as possible. Please be sure to state and spell your name, the number of people attending, and your dish. If you would be willing to help in the decoration of the Town Hall that day, also let us know.

Please note that the confirmed date of January 31 is a change from the tentative date of January 17 that was published in the last *Bugle*. Also note that Matt Stavish specifically requests that Jay Levy and his wife come and hang out.

Garrett Park Listserv

Our neighborhood is made up of people with a wide variety of backgrounds, skills, perspectives, and experiences. Tap into these resources and stay informed with the Garrett Park neighborhood listserv. The listserv is an electronic forum for neighbors to communicate information about town concerns, safety issues, upcoming events, and recommended services (such as contractors, lawn care, doctors, and baby sitters). The listserv will not be used for unsolicited marketing, and you can unsubscribe at any time. To join, e-mail Todd Harris or sign in at groups.yahoo.com/group/GarrettParkneighbors/join.

Comments for the Citizens Association?

If you have questions or comments for the Citizens Association, please send a note to P.O. Box 456 or e-mail either Matt Stavish or Chris Strong.

GPFS Presents *The Hustler*

Paul Newman was an icon of American cinema, and most seasoned filmgoers have a Newman film among their favorites. When he died last fall, the Garrett Park Film Society chose to recognize Paul Newman by selecting *The Hustler* for its first film of the 2009 season, to be shown on January 23.

One of the many films for which he received a Best Actor nomination, *The Hustler* (1961) showcased Newman’s dramatic range as an actor. Fast Eddy Felsen, a small-time pool hustler, is a flawed man, an anti-hero. He loses everything when he challenges Minnesota Fats (Jackie Gleason) to a high stakes match. George C. Scott, as a ruthless manager, agrees to teach him how to succeed, but at a cost. The black and white film is drama at its most incisive.

The film will begin at 8 pm in the Town Hall. Dinner will be served at 7:15; drinks (wine, beer, soda) will be available at 7 pm. Cost for dinner is under \$10; drinks range from \$1 to \$4. Admission is free for Film Society members (applications will

be available at the door); nonmembers pay \$5 per person/\$10 per family.

P.S. Volunteer cooks are always welcome. Please contact Suzanne Grefsheim if you would like to make a salad, entrée, or dessert for this or a future film. Cost of ingredients is reimbursed, and of course, your dinner is on the house.

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Seeking Committee Members

Founded in 1974 for the purpose of maintaining park acreage according to the original town plan, the citizens’ committee on parks—later renamed the Committee on Parks and Open Space—is currently seeking additional members. The only requirement is a willingness to serve. In keeping with its original charge, this committee researches and advises the Town Council on a wide range of parks-related issues, including playgrounds, potential improvements, and maintenance. It meets at least quarterly.

Meetings are held in a park or in the town office, and last from 60 to 90 minutes. If interested, or for additional information, contact me (by phone, e-mail, or PO Box 171). Come join us! The committee members and I look forward to your input.

Ida Sullivan, Chair

GPES

The 5th grade chorus at Garrett Park braved the cold and snow to sing in Bethesda at the Bethesda Holidays shindig at Veterans Park on December 6. The children did right well, and the parents were very complimentary about the songs. Of course, playing a keyboard in 40 degree weather was no picnic!

The UNICEF drive from October netted \$1,223.86 for the school to send up to New York. This will help provide classroom supplies, emergency food rations, and medical treatment for children in need around the world.

Remember to send your used toner cartridges and Box-Tops for Education to the school office. We get money for the return of the cartridges.

Mary Moyer

Arboretum Notes

First, the Arboretum Committee would like to thank the 30 or so residents who joined town arborist Phil Normandy on our annual walk through the town last month.

In other news, the committee members have finished canvassing the town and have reported back to Phil with recommendations for tree planting sites and about trees in need of care and pruning. The good news is that from this feedback Phil has been able to add eight new trees to our arboretum. This fall planting was especially notable for the exceptional specimens acquired to enlarge the mini-collection of red maples near the corner of Oxford and Montrose.

The bad news is that a few of our beloved trees need to be removed. The reasons for these removals are posted, and the Maryland state forester has granted approval. Each adjacent homeowner near the trees to be removed will also get an information packet detailing the tree(s) to be removed and the reason. Ted Pratt is now reviewing the bids for the removals, and work will proceed in the winter months ahead. Ted’s suggestion of doing these removals in the winter months has saved the town many thousands of dollars, as business for tree companies is typically slow in the winter, and prices reflect this. This year Ted has the tree men leaving firewood as a further benefit to town residents. This will be left on a first-come, first-serve basis.

The Arboretum Committee can never conclude a report without a hearty “thanks” to Butch, Frank, and Jose for their expert planting and care of our town trees. By doing our planting “in house,” we stretch our budget so we can plant many more trees than if we hired out this job. The arboretum committee has a fixed budget for these operations, and we are now planning for a spring planting from our next fiscal year money. Our

chairman Matthew Nau is planning what promises to be an especially exciting meeting in early February for committee members to review our spring plantings with Phil Normandy.

Sadly , this meeting will take place without Els Benjamin, who has stepped down from her everyday Arboretum Committee obligations to pursue other interests. The town of Garrett Park owes much of the splendor and glory of its arboretum to Els, who has helped manage our collection for many years. Phil and Els worked together at Brookside Gardens, so her legacy will continue through her protégé. Els also graciously offered to lend consultation as needed, but we will miss her at our regular meetings.

Tree in Focus: A specimen of *Acer griseum*—paperbark maple—located at Town Hall, was planted around 2006 and generously donated by town resident Kay Hager. This is a small tree grown for its fine red fall color and extraordinary cinnamon-colored exfoliating bark. It is suitable for sun/part shade.

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Bugle Notes . . . Sweet and Sour

- ♪ From the PO: there will be extended hours on Sunday, December 21, from 10 am to 4 pm at the White Flint and the Westlake offices for all of you who need to get that holiday mail off in time.
- ♪ The Garrett Park Swimming Pool Association is now accepting applications for summer employment in 2009. Lifeguards must be at least 15 years old and have certification in life guarding, CPR, and First Aid. Desk attendants must be at least 14 years old. Please submit job application letters no later than February 28 to GPSPA, Box 244, Garrett Park, MD 20896.
- ♪ We have a new resident in town. Kristin and Tony Altar are now the proud parents of Juliana, born November 24. From all accounts the family is very excited and happy.
- ♪ How many of us ignore the "No Turn on Red" sign at Strathmore and Kenilworth light? It can't only be out-of-towners doing the turning. (Perhaps some of us just forget.) Could the sign be changed to "Turn on Red OK after Pedestrian Crossing"?



Letter to the Editor

It is not about a porch

The town is being sued by Elaine and John Martin because they want to put a porch in front of their house, and the town has denied them a building permit on the grounds that it exceeds the town's total lot coverage limit. The Martins are strongly supported in their endeavor by the families of Elaine's sisters, Cindy Kratz and Loretta Bonner, and their mother, Rose Masucci, who all live in the 10700 block of Clermont Avenue. The Martins have stated publicly numerous times that all they want is for the town to grant them the building permit for the porch, and they will be satisfied. The town maintains, I believe correctly, that the request from the Martins violates existing law, and that barring a legislative action to change the law, the town cannot grant the permit, and therefore cannot cause the legal wrangling to end.

I think that the porch is a good idea, and would add to the visual quality of the Martin house. Knowing the Masucci family members and knowing the Mayor and most of the Councilmembers quite well, I have, on three separate occasions, offered to Elaine or her sisters that I would be happy to approach the town government on their behalf to consider a legislative solution to the problem. One of those occasions immediately followed a public meeting in which Harry Gordon, chair of the town setback committee, outlined a possible change to the setback ordinances that could accommodate the proposed porch. In each case I asked to meet with Elaine and John and as many of the family members as they deemed appropriate to determine exactly what they wanted from the town so that I could propose the appropriate solution to the mayor and council. In each case Elaine and/or her sisters initially expressed pleasure with my offer, and said that she/they would discuss the suggestion with other family members. In no case did they follow up with an offer to meet with them to discuss how to proceed with a proposal.

On several occasions I have discussed with the Mayor and various Councilmembers the possibility of reaching an agreement with the Martins through a proposal for a legislative change to accommodate the porch. Recognizing that any such change would have to be subject to an open, participative public process, they have indicated that they would welcome such discussion, and the possibility of a solution. Certainly the suggestion by the setback committee indicates a desire to find such an accommodation.

I know of one attempt at mediation and two attempts at negotiation between the town and the Martins, all of which have failed. From the agenda of Town Council meetings, it is clear that the town government was offering to change the law in the manner suggested by the setback committee to accommodate a front porch on the Martin home. It is also clear that the Martins did not agree to that, or the Council would have acted.

The Masucci family has now successfully circulated a petition for a referendum to recall the lot coverage ordinance just passed by the Council to protect the town's open space. The new ordinance was enacted because a side effect of the lawsuit could be to invalidate the town's previous combined setback ordinance. The ordinance does not in any way change the lot coverage requirements.

From all of this I have concluded that the town government is acting in good faith and with the sincere desire to maintain the character of the town, consistent with existing laws and expressed citizen wishes. I have also concluded that I do not know what the purpose of the Martins' lawsuit is, but it is not about getting a porch.

Peter Benjamin

Letter from the Mayor

As the year draws to a close, it is customary to reflect on the accomplishments of the past year and anticipate the coming year. Certainly 2008 has been eventful, for the nation and for Garrett Park. As Americans, we all drew pride as the nation crossed a historic threshold by electing an African-American as president. For many, the extraordinary breadth of support for this remarkable change was as satisfying and heartening as the outcome itself. Garrett Park saw change, too, albeit of the less sensational sort that typifies our tradition-loving community. The town finished the first stages of its multiyear Capital Improvement Plan, repairing and repaving the roadways most in need of attention. Storm drains were installed and improved. Over three dozen new trees were added throughout Garrett Park, which entered its fourth decade as an arboretum. The town enhanced the safety and comfort of its residents—particularly its most important residents, children and the elderly—by completing a sidewalk from Strathmore to the Cambria Park playground and the swimming pool. The town's long-range comprehensive examination of land use issues kicked off with well-attended walking tours focusing on the history and architecture of Garrett Park. We also had some fun: the Film Society presentations grew in popularity, Citizens Association and Women's Club events brought us together at Town Hall and elsewhere throughout the year, and we honored Donal McLaughlin on his 101st birthday with an impromptu street party, renaming a stretch of Weymouth Street in his honor.

What does the new year hold? For the nation, undoubtedly serious economic difficulties will continue. We wish great wisdom for the nation's leaders as they cope with the financial crisis and forge solutions that equitably distribute the inevitable sacrifices that will attend genuine resolution of our deep-seated economic difficulties. The town will face financial challenges, as well. Revenue from the state and Montgomery County will decline, as will the town's share of income tax receipts. Although property tax revenues may not diminish just yet, we need to be farsighted and realize that property taxes—the one significant revenue source over which the town has any real control—will inevitably plateau, and likely shrink, in the years to come. Crafting successful solutions to these and other challenges facing the town in the future will require resourcefulness,

dedication, and care. I am confident that the town will work creatively to accomplish its aims on a constrained budget.

The town's comprehensive look at its land use laws will occupy much of our attention over the coming year. The Town Council and I look forward to working with Gene Brantly and the many residents who have volunteered for the Land Use Task Force as we look at where we are as a town, how we got here, and where we want to be in the future. I would like to keep this letter as positive as possible, but it would be artificial to ignore a major factor affecting the town over the past year that will continue to impact us over the coming months. Notwithstanding formidable efforts by the Council to settle the lawsuit against Garrett Park over town open space laws, we have not been successful in reaching a conclusion to the suit, which continues to draw significant resources—financial and otherwise—from the town. The town will continue its defense of Garrett Park's open space laws. Look for information early next year about a referendum on the ordinance the Council passed in October in furtherance of preserving the existing Town open space laws.

Because this season is also one in which we reflect on, and offer thanks for, our good fortune, I want to convey appreciation to all those selfless volunteers who have contributed—in such a wide variety of ways—to the town over the past year. The town will meet the challenges of trying times because we continue to possess singular resources: a strong sense of community, a beautiful neighborhood, and most especially the dedication of those who volunteer their time and talents to Garrett Park. None of the accomplishments mentioned earlier in this letter would have been possible without the work of this town's splendid volunteers.

On behalf of the Council and myself, I also want to express my thanks to our dedicated town staff: Town Administrator Ted Pratt, Maintenance Supervisor Butch Frost, Town Office assistant Elizabeth Henley, and maintenance employees Frank Breazeale and Jose Diaz.

May all residents have a warm and joyous holiday season, and a splendid New Year.

Chris Keller